United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ NATO jets shoot down four aircraft violating "no-fly" zone in Bosnia and Herzegovina, after repeated warnings; Force Commander stresses that UNPROFOR activities will not be affected by incident.

+ United Nations launches revised inter-agency appeal for Angola, seeking $179 million for emergency humanitarian aid; revision due to increased scope of assistance, with 3 million now in need of help compared with 2 million last May.

+ Special Commission investigators find no evidence that Iraqi forces used chemical weapons against opposition elements in marsh region of Southern Iraq; investigation follows allegations of chemical attack last September.

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North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) jets shot down four aircraft near Banja Luka in central Bosnia and Herzegovina early this morning. According to the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) Force Commander, General Jean Cot, NATO fighters attached to "Operation Deny Flight" engaged six Galeb ground support aircraft flying in violation of Security Council resolution 816 (1993), which prohibits unauthorized flights by all fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters in the airspace of Bosnia and Herzogovina.

According to a United Nations spokesman, the Galeb aircraft ignored two warnings by the NATO fighters and subsequently four of the Galebs were shot down. He said it was not known where the other two planes had landed. During the operation, he said, the NATO fighters followed agreed procedures relating to the "no-fly" zone.

General Cot stressed that UNPROFOR remained commited to continuing the peace process and that the incident would have no effect on UNPROFOR activities thoughout Croatia and Bosnia and Herzogovina.

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The United Nations today launched the 1994 revised consolidated inter-agency appeal for Angola, seeking $179 million for emergency humanitarian aid. According to a United Nations spokesman, the revised appeal -- an updated version of the one-year programme issued last May -- is needed due to changes in the scope and nature of the humanitarian activities in the country. At least 3.3 million Angolans currently require some kind of relief assistance, compared to 2 million identified last May. The largest increase has been registered among the internally displaced, who now number over 950,000.

When the original appeal was issued last May, information on the overall conditions and humanitarian needs was scant due to lack of access and poor security conditions in different areas. Since then, negotiations on access and some decrease in the level of fighting between Governments forces and those of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) have enabled relief agencies to reach most locations in need of help.

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After an investigation carried out in the marshes in Southern Iraq, the Special Commission dealing with the destruction of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction reported today that it had found no evidence that chemical weapons had been used in the region. The investigation was undertaken in November 1993 after the Commission received allegations that the Iraqi military had used chemical warfare agents against opposition forces in the marsh region in the previous September.

A fact-finding mission was sent to Iran and to carry out an on-site inspection in Iraq. Portable sensors used during the investigation detected no chemical warfare agents and the team concluded that it was unlikely that a chemical weapons attack had taken place at the site in question. However, in order to confirm that finding, a large number of samples of flora, fauna, water, air and soil samples were taken for laboratory analysis. Three laboratories -- in the United States, the United Kingdom and France -- were involved in the tests, and they confirmed the on-site findings, that there were no traces of chemical warfare agents in the samples.

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